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Cassini Launch Scheduled for October 13

The launch of NASA's Cassini spacecraft aboard a U.S. Air Force Titan IVB rocket has been rescheduled on the Eastern Range for Monday, October 13.

The planet Saturn, its famous icy rings, and its enigmatic moon, Titan, are the prime scientific targets of the international Cassini mission, the most ambitious and far-reaching planetary exploration ever mounted.

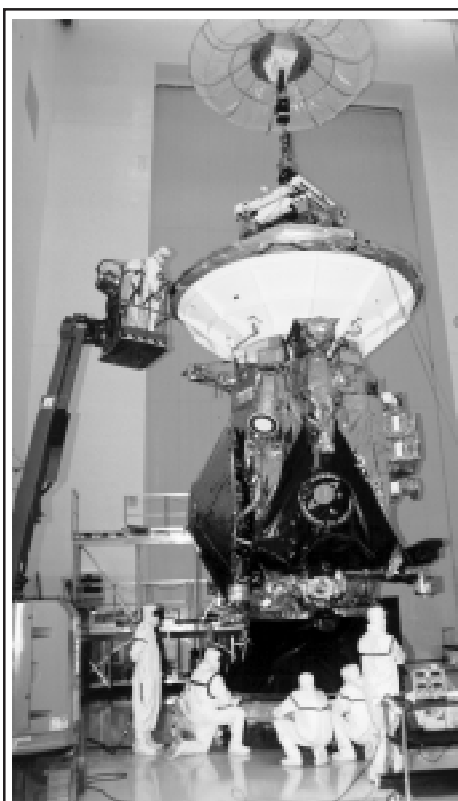
The mission marks the first time a space probe has attempted to land on the moon of another planet, providing the first direct sampling of the Earth-like atmosphere of Titan and first detailed pictures of its previously hidden surface. Titan is Saturn's largest moon, nearly the size of Mars and bigger than Mercury or Pluto.

Cassini, in development since October 1989, is a cooperative endeavor of NASA, the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Italian Space Agency. The mission will send a sophisticated robotic spacecraft equipped with 12 scientific experiments to orbit Saturn for a four-year period and study the Saturnian system in detail. The ESA-built Huygens probe that will parachute into Titan's thick atmosphere carries another six scientific instrument packages.

The launch period for Cassini's nearly seven-year journey to Saturn closes Nov. 15, 1997. It is scheduled to arrive at the ringed planet on July 1, 2004. Cassini's primary mission concludes July 2008.

On Nov. 6, 2005, Huygens will descend by parachute into Titan's sky, providing the first direct sampling of Titan's atmosphere and the first detailed photos of its hidden surface.

The mission is named for two 17th century astronomers: Italian-French astronomer Jean-Dominique Cassini made several key discoveries about Saturn, and Dutch scientist Christian Huygens discovered Titan.



In the Payload Hazardous Servicing Facility at the Kennedy Space Center, the Cassini spacecraft is being lifted for placement onto a transporter for moving to Launch Complex 40, Cape Canaveral Air Station.

El Nino is Back and Strong

Pacific Ocean-sea-surface height measurements and atmospheric water vapor information taken from two independent Earth-orbiting satellites are providing more convincing evidence that the weather-disrupting phenomenon known as El Nino is back and strong.

"The new data collected since April 1997 confirm what we had earlier speculated upon and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has predicted — full-blown El Nino condition is established in the Pacific," said Dr. Lee-Lueng Fu, project scientist for the U.S./French satellite TOPEX/POSEIDON satellite at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

"The recent data are showing us that a large warm water mass with high sea-surface elevations, about six inches above normal, is occupying the entire tropical Pacific Ocean east of the international date line. In fact, the surface area covered by the warm water mass is about one-and-a-half-times the size of the continental United States," Fu said.

"We watched this warm water mass travel eastward from the western Pacific along the equator earlier this spring. Right now, sea-surface height off the South American coast is 10 inches higher than normal, which is comparable with the conditions during the so-called 'El Nino of the century' in 1982-83."

On-going NOAA advisories on El Nino conditions are available on the Internet at the following URL: http://nic.fb4.noaa.gov:80/products/analysis_monitoring/ensostuff/index.html

Lewis Spacecraft to Re-enter This Week

Repeated attempts to re-establish radio contact with NASA's Earth-orbiting Lewis spacecraft since it entered a slow spin on August 26 have been unsuccessful due to increasing atmospheric drag.

The spacecraft's orbit is deteriorating. It is expected to re-enter and burn up between September 23-30, with September 27 as the most likely re-entry date, according to program officials.

"Based on our previous experience with this type of spacecraft, we expect Lewis to burn up in the atmosphere.

The probability that any part of it will survive is very low, and it presents no significant threat to people on the ground," said Samuel Venneri, Chief Technologist at NASA Headquarters.

"The potential loss of this mission is an obvious disappointment. However, the process of designing and building the spacecraft taught us a great deal about how to integrate cutting-edge technology into small missions and how to prepare the associated science teams, and we will apply those lessons to future projects," he said.

Wallops News Shorts

A Terrier-Improved Orion NASA sounding rocket was successfully launched from Anna Plains Station, Australia, Sept. 11. This was the fourth of four rockets flown in support of the Down Under Early Warning Experiment for the U.S. Department of the Army. The payload manager was Bruce Scott (Code 823).

A Black Brant IX sounding rocket carrying a plasma physics payload for the University of Pittsburgh was successfully launched from the White Sands Missile Range on Sept. 19. The payload was recovered. The principal investigator was Dr. Edward Zipf and the payload manager was Jan Neville (Code 823).

**Visitor Center Events
in October**

October 4 - Model Rocket Launch
A model rocket launch will be held at 1 p.m. Models of various rockets will be launched. Model rocketeers are invited to bring their own rockets and launch them. The launch will be canceled if it is raining or winds exceed 18 mph.

October 18 - "Design a Rover"
"Design a Rover" is the subject of a 1 p.m. program for children aged 6-10 years. This 40-minute activity will look at the issues involved with unmanned space exploration. The children will be given the opportunity to design and build their own planetary rover.

Saturdays and Sundays - "Puppets in Space"
"Puppets in Space", a 10-minute puppet show, will be presented at 11 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Puppet astronauts and Sam the monkey will explore space flight, including the space suit. An eight-minute version of the film "Astrosmites" follows the puppet show.

Daily - Space Ace
Children aged 5 -10 can earn a Space Ace certificate and a lithograph during their Visitor Center experience by completing an activity sheet.

Sundays - "Humans in Space"
"Humans in Space" is the subject of a 1 p.m. program for children of all ages. The 30-minute program looks at living and working in space, including a review of the astronauts' culinary delights and their wardrobe. The program is followed by a hands-on children's activity during which children have the opportunity to create their own "space helmet".

**Basketball League
Forming**

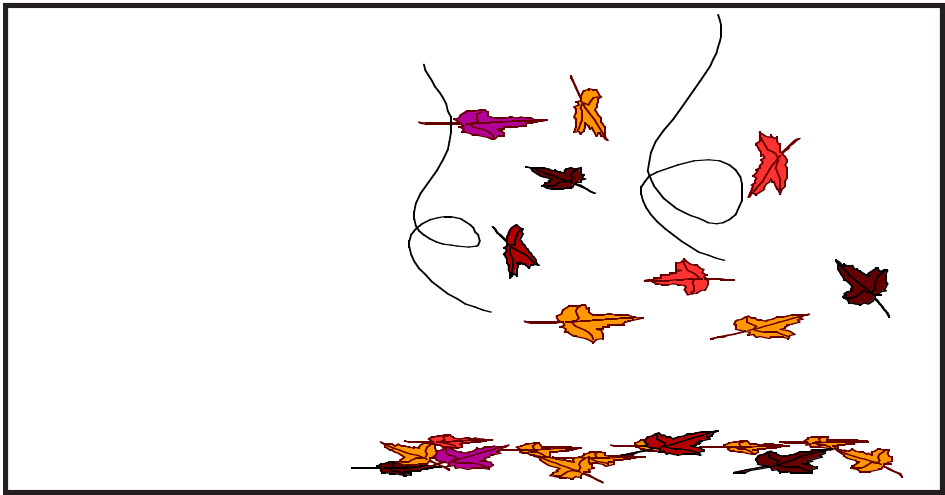
An organizational meeting of the WFF Basketball League will be held at noon on Friday, September 26 in the Gym.

Anyone interested in participating this season is requested to attend. We are not pros, just interested in having some fun and getting a bit of exercise.

For more information or if you can not attend this meeting and are interested in joining the League call Linda Wiles, x 1173.

House for Sale

Victorian (circa 1917) in the town of Parksley. Three bedrooms, two full baths, living room, dining room, and kitchen with pantry. Hardwood floors and plaster walls. All appliances included. \$44,900. Call (757) 336-3693, weekdays 6 to 9 p.m., and weekends 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.



Tailgate — Trunk Sale

Don't forget the tailgate—trunk sale on Thursday, September 25, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the parking lot behind the Flag Court.

This sale is for Wallops employees only and will not be open to the general public. Be advised that leave regulations apply if your participation extends beyond the normal lunch break. For further information or to reserve a free spot, call Charlotte Williams, x1483.



The Wallops Morale Activities Committee invites you to share in the excitement of the Maryland Renaissance Festival. This is an opportunity to go back in time to "Merry Olde England".

If you have never experienced the Renaissance Festival, you are in for a treat. Once in the "kingdom" you enter another time and space. All the vendors are in costume and speak in olde English. There are over a hundred vendors offering every imaginable ware. Events are planned throughout the day, such as mud wrestling, jousting, musical performances, magic shows, and impromptu skits featuring the Queen and her entourage, traveling troubadours and folks selling roses, food and every other imaginable treat. For the brave among you, costumes are available for rent inside the front gate.

The Festival, running through October 19, in Crownsville, MD, is close to Annapolis. The MAC trip to the Festival is scheduled for September 27. The cost is \$9.50 for adults and \$4.25 for children. Tickets are on sale in the Exchange, located in the front of the Cafeteria. Carpools will be set up.

For further information or to join a carpool call Pat Pruitt, x1251. Information on the Renaissance Festival also can be found at the following address: <http://www.rennfest.com>

The Falling Leaves

Autumn brings colorful leaves, cooler temperatures and earlier sunsets. Dress properly for outdoor fall activities and be prepared for sudden weather changes. Protect yourself against getting wet or chilled when doing yard work.

Falling leaves can pose a variety of hazards. Take the following precautions to minimize the chance of an accident.

- Check your local fire ordinance to find out if burning leaves is permitted and the times that burning is allowed.
- Trash and leaf fires should always be kept away from buildings and other combustible materials. Never let children play anywhere near open fire.
- Do not wear loose clothing or jewelry when operating leaf blowers or mulchers. Wear proper shoes and safety goggles. Never blow debris in the direction of bystanders. Store the blower in a dry place. Keep it and all garden machinery in safe working order and out of the reach of children.
- Do not allow leaves to gather on walks, driveways or patios. Wet leaves could pose a slipping hazard.

- While driving, watch for kids playing in leaves piled on curbs, driveways or sidewalks.

For Sale

One LP gas fireplace insert with electric blower. Used two seasons. Bought new for \$700, asking \$350. This unit heated a three bedroom house. Reason for selling, moving to a house without a fireplace. Call (757) 665-4941 any time and leave a message.

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